

# A THRIVING CITY AT WASHINGTON'S DOOR.

Alexandria, Va., situated on the south bank of the Potomac, and at the very door of the National Capital, with an estimated population of 18,000, exclusive of the surrounding suburbs, is rapidly becoming the workshop of Washington.

It is a new Alexandria to-day.

Progress is the watchword.

Labor and capital go hand in hand.

Its citizens are wide-awake, enterprising, ambitious—up and doing. A fine civic spirit actuates them. A more thriving city of its size is not to be found anywhere in the United States.

Alexandria is much more than a "historic old city." Its just pride in its past is coupled with a keen, practical interest in its present and absolute confidence in its future. There is a determination to push the city to the front as a manufacturing city, and develop its natural advantages and resources in all directions.

Take a look over the city to-day and you will find evidence of progress on every side. It is a completely renovated city, clean and inviting. Improvements in recent years embrace new streets, adequate sewers, large factory buildings, imposing business blocks, and handsome new dwellings, many of which have been erected on sites formerly occupied by dilapidated structures. Then new faces are seen, increasing business bringing many strangers from distant parts of the country.

Impetus was given to public improvements with the election of new members to the city council, chosen last June. The council is composed of sixteen members, and the board of aldermen of eight members, all of whom are heartily in favor of public improvements, and all are representative business men whose paramount desire is to push Alexandria to the front.

As a shipping and manufacturing center, Alexandria is ideally located—the actual gateway between the North and the South, with excellent harbor and railroad facilities and the largest freight yards in the South. Its six steamship lines connect with all coast, European, and South American lines.

The city has a water front of half a mile on one of the finest harbors in the United States. Here splendid sites can be acquired for manufacturing purposes at nominal figures, as the business men of Alexandria are eager to get manufacturers to locate here. Many inducements not offered to the manufacturer elsewhere are offered by Alexandria, and the city undoubtedly will add many more factories to its ever-increasing list, which now numbers about eighty.

For the past year the harbor business of the city shows a gratifying increase over that of the previous year. The business amounted to 326,039 tons, valued at \$3,584,305.40. The increase in tons forwarded was 19,964, valued at \$262,039, while the increase in tons received was 34,621, valued at \$275,066.55. The total increase was 54,585 tons, valued at \$537,135.55.

The railroads entering the city are equally as big a help to its healthful growth as its fine harbor facilities and steamship lines. The bulk of the enormous traffic entering the city is handled

at the Potomac freight yards, located in Alexandria County, about two miles north of the city. These yards are regarded as the finest gravity yards in the South. Costing more than \$2,000,000, they contain forty-five miles of tracks and have a capacity of 35,000 cars and employ approximately 800 persons.

The following is a list of the railroads which diverge here: Southern, Washington-Southern, Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Ohio, Chesapeake and Ohio, Atlantic Coast Line, and Seaboard Air Line.

In addition, the Washington, Alexandria and Mount Vernon Railway Company operates a trolley line between Washington, Alexandria, and Mount Vernon. Between Washington and Alexandria it operates trains every fifteen minutes during the day, giving splendid service with its fine double track. Hundreds of Alexandria commuters travel over the line, together with many Washington commuters. In addition thousands of strangers are within the city's gates almost daily, who, after visiting Washington's tomb, come here to see the points of historic interest.

The work of improving the city's streets and building sewers is being pushed with considerable vigor. More than one-half of the city is already sewered, the most of this work being accomplished within the past few years, large appropriations being made annually for the work by the city council. With a continuance of the work now in progress it will be a question of only a few years before the entire city is thoroughly sewered. This work has, no doubt, greatly added to the healthfulness of the city, as, with its sanitary drainage during the past year, the city had a total of but 322 deaths.

Keeping pace with the sewer work is the building of good roads and modern streets, which is closely following the first-named work. The old cobble streets, which for many years have proved an eyesore as well as a drawback to the city, are rapidly disappearing, being supplanted by modern vitrified brick streets and handsome macadam roadways, the bricks being used principally on the business streets and the macadam thus far on residential streets. That the street improvement work is on the increase is evident, and it is predicted that within the next few years the city will have as fine streets as is to be found in any city of its size in the country.

With sewers and good streets, progress is naturally following. This is evidenced to some extent by the numerous houses which have recently been erected, and many more are in progress of erection to-day. Another evidence of the growth of the city is had from the new State assessment, only recently completed, which shows an increase in valuations of considerably more than a million dollars over the assessment taken five years ago. A good portion of this was from an increase in valuations, and there was considerable from new buildings erected since the last State assessment was made. With the proposed reduction in the rate of the city taxes, which matter will, it is reported, be taken up by the city council in the near future, Alexandria will be able to borrow more money, all of which will be used for street and

sewer work. In this manner a great amount of work may be completed within the next twelve or eighteen months.

Among the recent improvements made in the shape of large buildings are the following: Packing and shipping plant of Armour & Co., at Cameron and Henry streets; large brick factory of Emerson Steam Pump Company, at the head of King street; large planing and sash factory of Rishell & Co., at Columbus and Wilkes streets; handsome home of Alexandria Lodge of Elks, with furnishings, which cost \$30,000, on the south side of Prince street between Royal and Fairfax streets. In addition many small factories have also gone up and many have made extensive improvements in their plants. Within a short time the city jail will be remodeled at a cost of \$10,000, making that structure practically a new jail. The Second Presbyterian Church is also to be remodeled at a cost of more than \$15,000.

The congregation of the First Baptist Church will soon begin the work of remodeling that edifice, plans for the work having already been drawn.

A project not far distant is the erection of a temple to "Washington, the Mason." The movement for the temple was inaugurated here February 22 last under the auspices of Alexandria-Washington Lodge of Masons, with grand masters from many States present. The proposed temple will cost nearly \$1,000,000, if the plans of the projectors are carried out.

A plant which cannot be overlooked is that of the Alexandria Electric Light Company, which furnishes the city with electricity for illuminating and power purposes. Recently new equipment has been added, and its lines have been extended into Alexandria and Fairfax counties. Motive power for the manufacturer can be secured at nominal figures from this concern.

Activity in the realty market has characterized the progress along other lines. Never was the demand greater for modern six-room brick dwelling houses with bath and conveniences than to-day. The demand far exceeds the supply. Many wideawake business men, realizing the need for such property, have already begun the erection of houses of such a character, and many more will doubtless follow. To-day there are far fewer idle houses in the city than ever before in its history.

Many modern houses are also being erected in the county contiguous to the city. Subdivision after subdivision has gone up north of the city, which now extends almost all the way to Washington. Within the next few years it looks as if there will be one continuous line of houses between here and Washington, with only the river separating the two cities.

With four modern public schools, two for whites and two for colored children, together with numerous private schools, and with all the other necessary facilities incident to the healthful growth of a city, Alexandria is progressing in a safe and sane manner, and to-day the city is in better condition in every respect than ever before, and its future is unusually bright, a source of gratification to all Alexandrians.